

Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2010

## ***Incumbent candidates take aim at Riemer during forum***

Floreen tells him: Six-year fiscal planning was not your idea

by Erin Cunningham | Staff Writer

[http://www.gazette.net/stories/08042010/bethnew211610\\_32552.php](http://www.gazette.net/stories/08042010/bethnew211610_32552.php)

Incumbent members of the Montgomery County Council fired back at challenger Hans Riemer's claim Thursday that it was his idea to draft a six-year fiscal plan for the county.

They also addressed conflicting remarks over whether he would fully fund union contracts.

During a forum hosted by Progressive Neighbors in Silver Spring, Riemer, a Democrat running for an at-large seat on the council, said he first called on the council to draft a fiscal plan during a May forum.

Council President Nancy M. Floreen (D-At large) of Garrett Park, who has said it was her idea for the council to adopt the plan — which it did last month — said she was stunned.

"We're glad you're with it," she said. "But that was not your idea."

"Nancy said it nicer than I would say it," said Councilman Marc Elrich (D-At large) of Takoma Park.

Riemer then said, "If that's true ...," but that rest of his statement was inaudible as incumbent council members loudly shouted. "It is true."

"I said, 'We should have a six-year fiscal plan,'" Riemer said after a moderator asked incumbents to let Riemer finish. "No one said we're already doing it. That's what the tape says. If that's true, I'm glad to hear it."

The forum was held at the Eastern Village Cohousing community in Silver Spring.

During the event, Councilman George L. Leventhal (D-At large) of Takoma Park addressed Riemer's response to union members that he would fully fund their contracts.

Riemer said in his AFL-CIO questionnaire that he would fund negotiated agreements. But on Thursday he said he could not promise to fund those contracts because of the county's budget situation.

"I said 'yes,' but the answer is 'yes, but.' And I said 'yes, but' when I had the opportunity to comment," said Riemer, who was endorsed by the union.

Elrich said he responded "yes," and added comments on the questionnaire to say that the employees' contracts would be funded if the county had the money to do so.

Rierner said he was not surprised by the tone of the forum.

"Increasingly, people are saying that they're not sure which of the incumbents they are going to vote for, but they are definitely going to vote for me, and I think that's what has everyone getting concerned," Rierner said in a phone interview.

During the forum, Rierner said he recently met with members of the Fraternal Order of Police, who asked if he would fully fund their contracts.

"This was my first time ever being stared down by [a group] of uniformed officers with an insistent demand, and I said, 'You know I support your contracts but MCGEO is going to ask me the same question and MCEA is going to ask me the same question, and you know if I say yes to everyone there's no money to do it,'" Rierner said, referring to the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994/Municipal and County Government Employees Organization and the Montgomery County Education Association.

"I just want to say that [Floreen] and I were on the same panel, Hans, and it just wasn't that scary," challenger Jane de Winter added.